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Editorial

THERE is one big thing that this issue is trying to do: erase, once and for all, the scare, the fright, the common misconceptions that have grown up around the word "contemplation." We hope to do this by spelling out clearly and accurately just what contemplation means.

Natural Perfection

It means, first of all, natural, human perfection. It means the full, harmonious development of the personality by a vital, muscular activity of the intellect and the will. Are not these the faculties that distinguish the human animal from all other forms of animality? Are not these the faculties that make man resemble God?

To contemplate is to use these glorious faculties as they are meant to be used. To contemplate is *to see*: to see God; to see the world in proper perspective; to see everything in God; to see every creature as a sign, a sample, or a symbol of Him who has written His name across the face of the earth. To contemplate is *to love*: to love God; to love all creatures in God, in Him who makes creatures good and lovable by His love for them; to love the manifold in the One, as part of our vast love for Him; to love all things hierarchically, that is, in their order of value, allowing the goodness of things to draw us step by step into the ocean and source of all goodness — into the Heart of God.

A man who contemplates like this is every inch a man. He becomes his very best self, fulfills all his tremendous potentialities by seeing, loving, and using the world aright. Creatures do not deceive him "by being more real than they seem" (G. K. Chesterton). He grows up, and lives a much larger life by "becoming the things he knows" (St. Thomas).

And by loving things he heals them, or elevates and transfigures them. "You can make nothing beautiful until you love it in all its ugliness" (G. K. Chesterton). By loving God he identifies himself with God; and, with grace, he becomes God by participation.

Only thus can he become wholly a man; for no man is completely human until he is partly divine. He achieves this to the extent that he knows and loves God—to the extent that he contemplates.

Supernatural Perfection

How can a man know and love God like this? How can he contemplate Him when there is an infinite gap between God and man? Christ the Mediator has bridged this gap forever. He has wedded time and eternity, humanity and divinity. He has introduced man into the hidden life of the Godhead.

Baptism does that for a man. It incorporates him into Christ. At that moment the theological virtues are infused into his soul. By Faith, a man shares Christ's own knowledge of His Father, becomes partner to the eternal secrets of the divine life of the Trinity. By Hope, he shares omnipotence, wields divine power, reaches out infinitely beyond human reach into the very heart of God, attempts what is seemingly impossible, and, like a man, strives, strives, and strives. By Love, he lives with Christ in God, and enjoys the life of God.

At the moment of baptism the seeds of contemplation are sown into a man's soul. Contemplation ought to be the normal development of his baptismal vocation. That is why theologians define contemplation simply as "the actuation of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the gift of Wisdom." St. Teresa says the same thing in another way. She says that contemplation is nothing more than *intimate* friendship with Christ. And that is exactly what it is. She does point out, though, that such intimacy is gained only in virtue of relentless generosity.

The big point is this: that every man is called to contemplation; that he has all the necessary equipment to achieve it in virtue of his baptism; that though it is a free gift of God, it is ordinarily a man's own fault if he does not possess it. What he has to do is dispose himself (1) by the grace of the sacraments, (2) by vigorous activity of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity (knowing, loving, and striving), and (3) by enough leisure (silence and solitude) to provide spiritual fertility.

"The ideal of the Christian life is that each one be united

to God in the closest and most intimate manner" (Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*). Our Holy Father also says: "In whatever circumstances a man is placed he should direct his intentions and actions toward this end" (*Menti Nostrae*). This is a sweeping statement. There are no exceptions. No one is left out. No moment of man's life is excluded from this law. This does not mean that a man can no longer lead an ordinary life. But his work, his duties, all his interests must be transfigured by a supernatural intention, divinized by charity so that even his most common and routine actions can become a sacrifice of praise to God. *There is only one way in which this can be done: by a life of prayer, of contemplation.*

World-Wide Influence

"It is now time to change the world." That statement, Whittaker Chambers tells us, is the basic concept underlying all of Communism's fanatic zeal and zest. The statement is true. But the vision (of the common man, the classless society) which fires their zeal and gives such furious impetus to their program, is false. Frank Sheed wisely points out that we shall overcome the forces of Communism only when our vision of Truth can match theirs in brilliance and glory and driving power. Now the only way we can achieve this compelling vision is through faith—a highly developed faith; and that means contemplation. There is no other way.

A minister of religion once asked Thomas Carlyle what he thought could save the Church of England. Mr. Carlyle answered: "Men who know God better than by hearsay." He was pleading for men who would know God by experience. And he was right. We are looking for the same kind of men. Contemplation means to know God by experience.

What St. John of the Cross said is true, namely: "An instant of pure love is more precious in the eyes of God and the soul and more profitable to the Church than all other good works together, though it seems as if nothing were done." But remember: he said *pure love*; and before you have that you must be purified by the dark nights of contemplation.

To strive after contemplation does not mean that you are "letting the world go hang." It means that you are more involved than

anyone else in the tragic plight of modern man. This was summarized by General Douglas MacArthur in 1945, in the brief but memorable radio address he delivered after the fall of the Japanese Empire. "The problem," said the General, "is basically *theological*, because it involves a spiritual improvement of human character, an improvement which must synchronize with our advance in science, art, literature, and all our material, cultural, development of the past two thousand years. It is of the spirit and the spirit alone that the flesh can be healed."

Such improvement demands contemplation. We must be contemplatives. We must be transformed into Christ.

FATHER WILLIAM OF THE INFANT JESUS, O.C.D.

A Cambridge don asked Erasmus: "Who would put up with the life of a schoolmaster who could get a living in any other way?" And Bacon was of the opinion that "to have commandment over children, as schoolmasters have, is a matter of small honor." How wrong they both were. To those who have heard the call, it is a life of unique honor, limitless fulfillment, and weighty responsibility. The job of the teacher is to excite in the young a boundless sense of curiosity about life, so that the growing child shall come to apprehend it with an excitement tempered by awe and wonder.

— John Garrett, *The Atlantic*, February, 1953

Father Augustine was a student of the renowned professor of spiritual theology in Rome, Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen. He is now conducting retreats, and is residing at the Carmelite Novitiate in Brookline, Mass.

What Is Contemplation?

Father Augustine of St. Teresa, O.C.D.

THE term "contemplation" is very often regarded even by devout Catholics as something very mysterious, even frightening. It is said that the gift of contemplation is for a small number of chosen souls. The ordinary Catholic had best travel by the simpler paths of the ascetical life. To aspire to the contemplative life would be presumptuous and dangerous.

The prevalence of such an attitude toward contemplation can be explained only by the fact that many Catholics, among them priests and religious, do not understand what contemplation is. We avoid and fear that which we do not know. For some strange reason many associate contemplation with the extraordinary in the spiritual life. The very word conjures up ideas of visions, ecstasies, locutions, and all the rest which are definitely out of the ordinary. It is true that many saints experienced such phenomena in their own spiritual lives, but since they are extraordinary, they should not be desired or sought. If contemplation actually belonged among the number of such charismatic gifts it would be most unwise to desire it or seek it.

St. John of the Cross, who himself reached the sublimest heights of contemplative prayer, has written much about contemplation. We can do no better than go to his writings for enlightenment and clarification.

The Mystical Doctor, in all his writings, has but one objective: he would help and direct souls toward perfect union with God. It is his intention to describe "the manner of ascending to the summit of the mount, which is the high estate of perfection which we here call union of the soul with God."¹ When St. John speaks of union with God he is referring to the perfection of the life of love which is sanctity.

In order to achieve union with God the faculties of the soul must undergo a long and painful purification. This whole process of purification is called a journey from sense to spirit. The opposition between sense and spirit is constantly recurring in the pages of the saint. That pertains to sense which comes through sense, is directed toward it, or has to do with it. That pertains to spirit which is removed from sense, does not depend upon it, nor is directed toward it. There is a knowledge of God dependent on sense and a knowledge independent of sense, the latter being far superior to the former. If the soul is to reach divine union it must pass beyond that knowledge which has its roots in sense. It must pass out of the "life of the sense to that of the spirit."²

That knowledge of God which is purely spiritual comes from a source very far removed from that of natural knowledge; its ultimate foundation is not to be found in external sensible reality, nor does it pass through the medium of the senses, but is directly infused by God into the understanding. When the soul is the recipient of this high and spiritual knowledge it is said to live the life of the spirit. It is this infused spiritual knowledge which unites the understanding with God.

There is no doubt that the spiritual knowledge of which St. John speaks is contemplation. Contemplation is that superior type of knowledge which characterizes the life of the spirit just as meditation characterizes the life of sense. St. John speaks of the soul drawing forth "from the life of sense to that of the spirit — that is, from meditation to contemplation."³ The life of the spirit and contemplation are correlative terms; where we have "spirit" there we have contemplation.

¹ *Ascent*, "Argument."

² *Dark Night*, I, x, 1.

³ *Ibid.*

There is hardly need for insisting on this, that contemplation essentially pertains to the intellect. It may be considered as an exercise of the intellect, and then it is the act by which the intellect understands some divine reality. Of course, acts of the other spiritual faculties are by no means excluded from accompanying the act of contemplation. In fact, contemplation without an act of the will loving, were it possible, would be of no avail to the soul. But the act of contemplation itself is of the intellectual order. Contemplation may also be considered as the knowledge which results from the contemplative act. St. John calls it "an infused and loving knowledge of God."⁴ He also refers to it as a divine light (and the intellect is the eye of the soul), mystical theology, secret wisdom, all of which terms point to contemplation as being an intellectual experience. It will be more helpful for us to consider contemplation as the knowledge which unites with God, rather than the act by which this knowledge is apprehended by the intellect.

The knowledge of contemplation is very far removed from all natural knowledge and pertains to the supernatural order. It is quite different from the knowledge we have of people, of science, of philosophy. The intellect does not acquire it by its own natural activity. In fact, its own natural activity must, in a certain sense, cease if contemplative knowledge is to blossom forth in the soul. A divine light is what St. John of the Cross calls contemplation. "For the light which is to be given to the soul . . . is a divine light of the highest kind, which transcends all natural light, and which, of its nature, can find no place in the understanding."⁵ Since this divine light, which is none other than contemplation, transcends all natural knowledge it must belong to the supernatural order. It is intimately connected with the wondrous life of sanctifying grace which is the heritage of all those who have been cleansed in the saving waters of baptism.

Such a sublime knowledge of God and divine things does not come to the soul by ordinary channels. The natural operations of the intellect cannot attain to the realm of the supernatural. Contemplation proceeds from the liberality of God who desires

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, xviii, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, ix, 2.

to be known and loved by His creatures. It is He who infuses this divine gift into the souls of those who prepare themselves for it by lives of prayer and sacrifice. For this reason St. John of the Cross calls this supernatural knowledge "infused contemplation." "This dark night," he writes, "is an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it of its ignorance and imperfections, habitual, natural, and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives infused contemplation, or mystical theology. Herein God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in perfection of love, without its doing anything, or understanding of what manner is this infused contemplation."⁶

God is active in the contemplative soul leading it far beyond the ramparts of pure reason into a life of divine intimacy. The night before He died our Lord promised to send the Paraclete, the Teacher of truth, whom the world cannot receive. "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things."⁷ This promise finds its fulfillment in the contemplative who is taught in a most delicate way by the Holy Spirit.

Contemplation, which the Holy Spirit communicates to the intellect, has nothing to do with the senses and is accompanied by no sensible image in the imagination. We know that all natural knowledge has its roots in sense. *Nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensibus*. We know that sensible images in the imagination always accompany our intellectual processes. Such a natural knowledge cannot unite the understanding with God, who is pure and infinite Spirit. Contemplation transcends the limitations of natural knowledge which comes through the senses. "For inward wisdom," writes St. John of the Cross, "is so simple, so general, and so spiritual, that it has not entered into the understanding enwrapped or clad in any form or image subject to sense."⁸ The sense faculties are incapable of grasping or receiving any part of that perfect and spiritual knowledge which the soul has of God.

Naturally, there will be a certain pain in the soul especially in the beginnings of contemplation. The imagination will be con-

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, v, 1.

⁷ Jn. 14:26.

⁸ *Dark Night*, II, xvii, 3.

fused, not being able to accompany the intellect on its journey into the depths of divine wisdom. The intellect itself will be disquieted, not being able to function in a natural manner as it is wont to do. Only gradually will the soul grow accustomed to this ineffable manifestation of God and then there will be surpassing peace and ecstatic joy.

There is a second property of contemplative knowledge which we must mention. It is obscure. St. John of the Cross calls it dark, confused, obscure, general, vague. The soul "understands nothing definitely."⁹ He does not hesitate to affirm that "when this knowledge is purest and simplest and most perfect, the understanding is least conscious of it and thinks of it as most obscure. And similarly, in contrariwise, when it is in itself least pure and simple in the understanding, it seems to the understanding to be clearest and of greatest importance, since it is clothed in, mingled with, or involved in certain intelligible forms which the understanding or senses may seize upon."¹⁰

As far as natural knowledge is concerned, obscurity or lack of clarity would be an imperfection: the more obscure the knowledge, the less perfect it is. It is natural for the understanding to have clear and precise knowledge of its proper objects, to comprehend them, to penetrate their inmost depths. And yet St. John tells us that contemplation is not clear, but obscure and vague; in fact as contemplation develops in the soul its obscurity deepens. Is contemplation, therefore, an imperfect knowledge of God? Insofar as faith is imperfect, it is. Contemplation is simply an enlightened faith, a faith brought on to perfection by the action of the Holy Spirit. Faith is by its very nature obscure. By faith we see as through a glass, darkly. Until we pass through the portals of death we must be content to walk in faith. Only then will faith come to an end and give place to the glory of the Beatific Vision. Notwithstanding the obscurity of contemplation, it is far more perfect than that clear knowledge of God which was had through meditation. By faith the contemplative reaches out and touches God.

The obscurity of contemplation finds its ultimate explanation in

⁹ *Ibid.*, II, xi, 1.

¹⁰ *Ascent*, II, xiv, 8.

the being of God Himself. God is a pure Spirit of unlimited perfection. He infinitely transcends the created universe. In His own divine life He is not the proper object of the human intellect. He is incomprehensible. The intellect, in this life, understands clearly only that which it can comprehend, which falls within the sphere of its natural operation. But the being of God is beyond the natural operation of the intellect, and cannot be understood in a clear and distinct manner. Only in heaven will God manifest Himself clearly to our weak human minds by means of a special gift, the light of glory. The contemplative is overwhelmed by the eternal splendor of God. Just as the eye cannot look at a bright sun without being blinded, neither can the mind of man gaze upon God without being plunged into a seeming darkness and oblivion. But the darkness of contemplation is one of the greatest blessings that could come to the soul, because in "that general, confused and loving knowledge . . . is effected union of the soul with God."¹¹

The contemplative soul makes no particular acts, no meditations or reflections. The intellect does not reason out things as it does in meditation. St. John repeats this over and over again. "For the farther the soul progresses in spirituality, the more it ceases from the operation of the faculties in particular acts, for it becomes more and more occupied in one act that is general and pure."¹² The Mystical Doctor by no means affirms that the understanding is inactive. What he does say is that it ceases from particular acts, from meditations and reflections. The reason for this is to be found in the excellence of contemplative knowledge itself. In the practice of meditation, the more the soul attains knowledge of God, the more it is stimulated to further activity. The knowledge of meditation is an incentive to further reflection and reasoning. It can be compared to crumbs falling from the table which only whet the appetite of the starving man. In contemplation it is quite different. This knowledge is so profound, perfect, and sublime that it more than suffices for the soul. It contains within itself so much of God that the intellect can do nothing else but simply gaze at and rest in this abundant outpouring of divine truth,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, III, xxxiii, 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, II, xii, 6.

without making or desiring to make particular acts and reflections. These are made in order to gain more knowledge because the knowledge of the moment is insufficient. But contemplative knowledge not only suffices for the soul, but is, in a certain sense, too much for it. The faculties of the soul are overpowered by this wondrous communication of the divine; they cannot act. To work with the faculties now, to meditate and reflect, would be trying to attain what has already been attained. "And thus the faculties that were journeying to a place whither the soul has arrived cease to work, even as the feet stop and cease to move when their journey is over."¹³ The saint does not wish to imply that this knowledge has come through the action of the faculties of the soul, but simply tells us that to work with the faculties now by reflection and particular acts would be useless and harmful. In making particular acts the soul would be seeking to attain by its own natural activity a low type of knowledge of God, while it is already enjoying the sublime knowledge of contemplation.

Since contemplation essentially is knowledge, it might well be asked what relationship it bears to the perfection of the Christian life. We know that sanctity consists in perfect love of God expressed in absolute conformity to the divine will. "The state of divine union consists in the soul's total transformation, according to the will, in the will of God, so that there may be naught in the soul that is contrary to the will of God, but that in all, and through all, its movements may be that of the will of God alone."¹⁴

It is a philosophical axiom that we love only that which we know, and we love an object only as much as we know it. Love is always proportioned to knowledge. A man cannot love a person whom he does not know. He cannot love a person intensely whom he does not know thoroughly.

The same holds true in regard to man's relationship with God. A man who does not know God will certainly not love Him. If he knows Him only slightly, then his love will be slight. In order to love God with all one's mind, heart, and strength there must be a profound knowledge of the Divinity in the intellect.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, xi, 2.

St. John of the Cross teaches that there are three kinds of knowledge of God in the intellect each producing love in the will. The first is the knowledge of God which the soul has from creatures — from the stars, and the plants, and the animals. These creatures all carry messages from God to the soul. Such knowledge produces a slight wound of love.

The second is knowledge of God which the soul receives from the mysteries of faith, from the Incarnation and Redemption. This type of knowledge produces a sore of love which takes firmer hold upon the soul and lasts longer than the wound. It leads the soul to be more generous with God.

"The third kind of pain in love is like to dying, which is as though the soul had the sore festered. . . . The soul lives, while yet dying, until love slays it, and so makes it live the life of love, transforming it into love. And this dying of love is effected in the soul by means of a touch of the highest knowledge of the Divinity."¹⁵ This "touch of the highest knowledge of the Divinity" is a sublime act of contemplation. Such contemplative knowledge causes the soul to die to itself, to all self-seeking and selfishness, that it may live the life of love perfectly. Contemplation, therefore, is one of the most powerful means of sanctity.

In order to love God with all one's mind, heart, and strength there must be a profound knowledge of God in the intellect. Contemplatives who have drunk deep of the depths of divine wisdom burn with the love of God. "I have come to cast fire on the earth," said our Lord, "and what will I but that it be enkindled." He has enkindled that fire in the souls of those who have had the courage to enter the dark night of contemplation. Theirs is an all-consuming love which prompts them to give themselves completely to the service of their divine Lover. They are the ones who have their feet solidly planted on the ground, who see life in its true perspective. They are the great realists of the world who know, love, and serve God.

¹⁵ *Spiritual Canticle*, B. VII, nn. 2, 3, 4.

With characteristic zest and unerring precision, Father Martindale, famous Jesuit writer, now living a quiet life in England, delivers an idea that, once grasped, could transform our lives.

The Apostolic Fruits of Contemplation

C. C. Martindale, S.J.

ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX, contemplative by vocation and in practice, can yet be called the "Apostle of the Apostolate." She meant to spend her heaven doing good upon earth; and she has been named patroness of foreign missions.

St. Teresa of Ávila, mother of contemplative souls, led an incredibly active exterior life. Thus there is not, or should not be, any clash between the two ideals, "contemplative" and "active." What I would try to say here is that the true contemplative will exercise, *precisely by being so*, a far-reaching apostolate; and that only in porportion as external activity is permeated all through by "contemplation," will it produce the effects that the "apostle" hopes to obtain.

It is known how dearly St. Teresa loved "praying to" God within her. I have put "praying to" in quotation marks because I do not mean now the prayer of petition or any use of words, and almost less, any argumentation or wondering how the Infinite is in me; if vague images float across my mind — like a brimming cup, a sponge full of water, my lungs full of air, it doesn't matter, for everyone knows that such images are poor little things, and I have no intention of letting my mind dwell on them. I mean, just now, allowing myself to repose in a condition of pure *faith*, of knowing that it is so, that God (about whom I have been taught

so much) is really in me, altogether. Sometimes it will come as a shock to realize that what I know about God is *true*, indeed, that any part of the Faith is true, and not a sort of mathematical diagram of which all the parts fit very well together; that it is not merely an accurate pattern for the mind, without cracks or dislocations. It is faith in the living God, and, with His grace, we may be able to be quite simply in that state of faith, knowing that thoughts whether *about* Him, or indeed about anything at all, that drift across us are no more than shadows compared with the absolute Reality, God-in-us, and need not trouble us.

Divine Activity

But then, the living God is an active God: "My Father worketh even unto now."¹ Only in imagery, easily understood, was God represented in *Genesis* as "working" through the six days of Creation and "resting" on the seventh. God is always "active," preserving and guiding us, and in an infinity of other ways that we cannot guess; but never is the Sabbath of His eternal serenity disturbed. *Immotus in Te permanens*. But what we have (with great courage) to realize is that God-living-in-me is God-active-through-me. I say: "with great courage" because we are so accustomed to think of ourselves as worthless: "When you shall have done all that was commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants";² and when do we even do that "all"? Whether we look at ourselves, or extend our view to the terrible state of the world, of what else *can* we be aware save our utter insufficiency? Well, every apostle must begin with, and grow up with, the conviction of his impotence, of his nonentity. Think of poor Moses;³ of Jeremias:⁴ "Then said I: Ah, ah, ah, Lord God! I cannot speak, for I am a child!" But God said to Moses: "Who made man's mouth?" and to Jeremias: "Say not, I am a child!" We then have to remember God *active in me*. It is not merely that God may enable me to do all sorts of things that I never thought I could, but that He will act *through* me, in ways of which very likely I shall never know anything. Possibly, for our

¹ Jn. 5:17.

² Lk. 17:10.

³ Exod. 4:10.

⁴ Jer. 1:6.

encouragement, He may let us find that some word of ours, spoken long ago, has been remembered, put to use, helped a man to conquer temptation. But it may still be best not to see results, and again to rely entirely upon faith, on the *fact* that God is active *now*, through *me*. I don't ask to know "how." Of course, there is nothing against "directing" one's hope and prayer toward some particular "intention," like China, or a friend; but again, we remain quite content to be totally unaware of what God does in China because of one's prayer, or unable to see that anything happens to one's friend: but we hang on to the *certainty* that God is acting through us, and the more powerfully in proportion as we do not impede Him, which we do so long as any selfishness remains in us.

In Us and Through Us

But we are Christians and are meant to see God in Christ and to be sure that He is living in us, and we in Him. I think that St. Paul uses the words "in Christ" more than 160 times, and we cannot forget his: "I live, no longer merely 'I,' but Christ is living in me."⁵ Is not the increase of reading St. John and St. Paul, and the use of their doctrine in retreats and even sermons something of a miracle? Has not the expression "the Mystical Body of Christ" risked becoming so familiar to the past generation or two of Catholics that the intensity of its meaning may escape us? I do not wish, at the moment, to dwell so much upon the fact of Christ's being in us, as of Christ, active and working through us. St. Paul speaks of the "mystery, which is Christ in you," and how he toils to present every man "perfect in Christ" — yes, "it is to bring *that* about that I toil and struggle according to the energy of him that energises so mightily in me";⁶ and elsewhere in the midst of a magnificent paragraph, St. Paul prays that God may make known "what is the overwhelming greatness of his power unto us who believe — it is on the scale of the energy of the might of his strength which he caused to energise in Christ, raising him from the dead."⁷ Amazing accumulation of "power" words, the power of God, which energizes in Christ, and through Him in Paul himself! It is no good saying:

⁵ Gal. 2:20.

⁶ Col. 1:27, 29.

⁷ Eph. 1:19-20.

"But I am not St. Paul!" No: but God is God: and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Certainly He does not give St. Paul's vocation to everyone; but He is *able* to work as He may please in and through each of us, always assuming that we do not interpose those barriers of selfishness which "hold up" His activity that He would wish to display by means of our instrumentality.

Through the Humanity of Christ

I venture to insert a few lines about what sometimes troubles readers of the great mystics — their doctrine that, in our progress to perfect union with God, we must somehow go higher even than the humanity of Christ. I would say only this: First, may we study ever more closely the record of His life on earth; try to make sure of the meaning of every word He spoke; move with Him through the wheat fields and olive trees; sit beside Him among the wild flowers and with Him wonder at them; keep close to His mother and seek to think her thoughts whether at Bethlehem or on Calvary: until we feel it almost a shock to return from His Holy Land to the place where we are called to spend our own earthly years — that come so rapidly to a close. Second, we may remember this at least — forming part, as we do, of our Lord's Mystical Body, we cannot separate ourselves from His humanity, for "Christ is not divided." Where He is at all, He is there altogether; and — "Where He is, there shall we be also," for that is the fulfilling of His prayer recorded in Chapter 17 of St. John. And we can pray with all our heart the *Anima Christi*.

Alas, such is our human weakness, that we are bound to realize only intermittently, if at all, that this is true. Therefore, we end as we began by making our act of faith — faith in the *fact* of God in us, and God through us; Christ in us, Christ through us. And just as we may be thinking that even such an act of faith is beyond us, we recall, once more, the Apostle:⁸ "The Spirit himself, on his side, comes in aid of our weakness. For what we should pray, and how to pray as we ought, we do not know, but the Spirit himself comes interceding for us with a cry beyond all words, and God, who reads the very depth of our hearts knows what is the meaning

⁸ Rom. 8:26-27.

of his Spirit." I have — very slightly — paraphrased St. Paul's Greek: but it was only right that we should name the Holy Spirit: for we know that when God acts, all the Holy Trinity is active, and here we find St. Paul saying just what we wanted — that the Holy Spirit is *in* us, and that God, who scrutinizes the very inmost parts of our hearts, hears there the voice of His own Spirit which is above and beyond all need of words. So, clear through our mutterings and stammerings, rises the Voice of that Holy Spirit, and carries up our poor prayer along with His own interceding cry. St. Teresa will be pleased that we should have ended with the thought of the Most Blessed Trinity.

For how can He give us the whole height of heaven till we come begging to Him with empty pokes? How can He bear us up in His hand while we grovel safe on the ground? How can He lap us close and dear in His love when we are girded with horses and cattle, and cloaked about with gold.

— H. F. M. Prescott in *The Man on a Donkey*

The disintegration of our world is the corruption of a dead body that has lost the life of prayer. The way back to health and wholeness is the way of prayer. Father Peter-Thomas continues to explain this way with maximal clarity and simplicity.

How to Pray

Father Peter-Thomas of the Sorrowful Mother, O.C.D.

In outlining St. Teresa's method we have attempted to make it as simple as possible. A brief reading of the schema should serve to impress it on the mind. The individual can then employ it at prayer without the necessity of reference to a meditation chart. On various occasions one will find that he may omit some of the steps. For example, one might approach his period of meditation quite sufficiently in the presence of God. As in all other phases of life, common sense should be the guiding factor.

We have outlined five general steps in St. Teresa's method of meditation:

1. *Preparation:* It is difficult to launch into prayer from the midst of a fury of distracting occupations. Most of us are forced to pause momentarily and place ourselves before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, or God as He resides in the soul. "A good beginning is half the battle."

2. *Selection of the Material:* After one has reminded himself of Christ's presence, it then becomes necessary to select a subject for the day's conversation. This is done best ordinarily by reading from some book suited for meditation (preferably, the Gospels). Or it may be accomplished by the study of a picture or statue of our Lord.

3. *The Consideration:* Having placed himself in Christ's presence and selected the proper material, the individual begins the examination of the day's matter. In this study of the material, one

asks himself the traditional question: Who is it here in this scene? What is He doing? Why is He doing it? What does it mean to me?

4. *The Conversation*: Now one is prepared to undertake the principal part of meditation, that for which all the preceding steps have been devised. The soul begins to talk slowly to Christ, telling Him of its love for Him; its desire to serve Him; its willingness to do anything for Him. He adores Christ in the scene of the day's meditation; he expresses his love for Him; thanks Him for past favors; asks Him for new favors in the future. When the conversation begins to falter, it will be necessary to return briefly to the consideration to stimulate new thoughts for additional conversation with Christ.

5. *The Conclusion*: This is an entirely optional step, but we feel it to be of great value in making progress in prayer. Near the close of the meditation period it would be well for one to "tie up the loose ends." Our Lord should be thanked for the graces received during the time of prayer coming to a conclusion. Then very briefly one might examine his failings during the period and promise to eradicate these in the future. This determination to hold better conversation with Christ in succeeding periods gives one a strong determination to make further strides along the road of prayer. And with this burst of enthusiasm and promise for the future, the day's prayer is concluded.

This method is contractible; it can be used for a five-minute or an hour's meditation. Of course, in the longer meditation it will be necessary to repeat steps 3 and 4 a number of times during the period. But, one of its major advantages is that it can be employed during a quick visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or in a long, formal period of meditation. It is entirely pliable.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of following some such outline, especially as one first begins the practice of meditation. The modern, twentieth-century man is completely unaccustomed to the rarefied air of the interior life, and will certainly wander and stumble if he does not have an outline to follow. If one begins prayer with this methodical procedure, he can be sure to make progress. St. Teresa is insistent that we attack this problem with a grim determination. And one of the best evidences of good faith

in the matter is to proceed systematically to one's conversation with Christ.

EXPLANATION OF THE METHOD

"What great blessings God grants to a soul when He prepares it to love the practice of prayer."

— ST. TERESA

General Preparation for Meditation

The general preparation which is most required for successful meditation is a personal conviction of its necessity and a stanch determination to persevere in its practice. If one has acquired this mental attitude, he has made a splendid preparation for his meditation.

St. Teresa gives us this important admonition:

"It is essential, I maintain, to begin the practice of prayer with a firm resolution to persevere in it."¹

If one is not convinced of the necessity of meditation in his own life, nor resolved never to omit its daily exercise, then he will soon give it up on one pretext or another. Therefore, one should not approach the practice of meditation with the intention of "giving it a try"; but rather, one must undertake the exercise with a belief that it is of the utmost importance that he adopt its practice and persevere in it. Our mental attitude toward any occupation will determine, to a large extent, our success in it; meditation is no exception.

Meditation, furthermore, is not an isolated experience in one's spiritual life. For, as St. Augustine maintains, the science of prayer is the science of life. To engage in a satisfactory conversation with Christ during a given fifteen-minute period, it is necessary to employ other spiritual aids throughout the *entire day*. Chief among these are: recollection, mortification, spiritual reading, and the cultivation of humility of heart. These will all be discussed more

¹ St. Teresa, *Way of Perfection*, Ch. 21.

fully in Part V; it will suffice to comment briefly upon them here.

It is, understandably, much easier to unite ourselves to Christ during a meditation period if we have remained in contact with Him throughout the day in the midst of our duties and occupations. This can be effected by an exercise known in spiritual terminology as "the presence of God." It consists in evoking aspirations and short prayers to our Lord at various intervals during the day. The employment of such an exercise is of incalculable help in one's prayer life. Then, too, a generous program of mortification aids greatly in perfecting one's meditation. Mortification serves a twofold purpose: it detaches one from loves and attachments which hinder the soul's affection for Christ; and it gives one the self-mastery and discipline so necessary during meditation. Daily spiritual reading will furnish thoughts and ideas for our conversation with Christ. The more we know about our Lord, the more we will appreciate Him and be able to speak intelligently to Him. Finally, the cultivation of a humble heart assures us of not being excessively taken up with ourselves during the period of meditation. We will find our sufficiency in Christ and tend to depend on Him rather than be preoccupied with ourselves.

All of these measures will make for better meditation. Above all, though, one's attitude to the practice is of primary importance. If a proper attitude be lacking, then one's hope of success is almost nil. To insure perseverance in meditation, therefore, one should determine the precise time at which he will meditate each day. And only on extremely rare occasions and for most pressing reasons should he ever omit his meditation at that time. If one has not selected a definite hour for his prayer, he will find more often than not he will omit it. Some find it easier to meditate in the morning, others in the evening. Each one should choose the time most suited for him in relation to his temperament and occupations. But, whether he selects morning or evening (or better yet, both), he should choose some definite time at which he will meet Christ for his daily conversation with Him.

Cardinal Mercier relates this penetrating bit of insight on the matter:

It would appear that before the close of the Middle Ages the

masters of the spiritual life did not deem it needful to appoint a fixed hour each day for meditation. At the present day, however, this custom is not only advisable, it is absolutely necessary. Such is the hurry and bustle of modern life, such the multiplicity of interests and of social obligations, that it has become almost impossible for men to lead a life of union with God unless they reserve one tranquil hour for Him in the early morning, before the whirlwind of their occupations carries them off, covering their souls with its blinding dust and deafening them with its noise.²

One must also convince himself that his efforts will eventually be rewarded with success, that he will learn to make satisfactory conversation with our Lord. The hope of success — and success is here assured — is always an enticement to persevering effort. St. Teresa offers us this consolation:

Besides the courage we ought to have in the combat of mental prayer, we must also be firmly convinced that, unless we allow ourselves to be vanquished, our efforts will be crowned with success.³

Hence, the determined soul need never give way to feelings of discouragement. Despite the difficulties entailed and the persevering effort required, ultimate victory will be ours. The only disaster is to cease trying.

These, therefore, are the attitudes we should bring to prayer. They will insure that we launch into prayer with determination and perseverance — and with confidence in our ultimate success.

Immediate Preparation for Meditation

The time of meditation is at hand! A suitable hour has been selected, and the person kneels to begin his conversation with Christ. First of all, the presence of our Lord should be recalled to mind. If meditation is made before the Blessed Sacrament, this is readily accomplished. A glance at the tabernacle, with a consideration of our Lord's abiding presence in the Host, will serve to center one's attention on Christ. But even when the meditation is undertaken apart from the Blessed Sacrament, it should be relatively easy to consider the penetrating presence of

² Cardinal Mercier, *Conferences*, trans. by J. M. O'Kavanagh (Newman, 1943).

³ St. Teresa, *Way of Perfection*, Ch. 23.

Christ, who is always near to each of us and ready to hear our every prayer.⁴ But no matter where the meditation is made, the important point is to arrive at a conscious realization that Christ is close to us and willing to engage in conversation with us. For most of us, engulfed as we are in a flurry of distracting occupations, this momentary pause to consider Christ's nearness is essential.

Having noted the need of drawing close to our Lord, we are confronted with two incidental questions: What posture should we assume at prayer? Should we keep our eyes shut during the period? A word about each will suffice.

St. Teresa advises us to choose a comfortable position at prayer; but, she wisely adds, a position that is not too comfortable — else drowsiness might set in. Meditation is a period in which we unite ourselves with God; it is not to be devoted to the practice of physical mortifications entailed in rigid posture, or the like. It might be best to begin our meditation on our knees. This will aid us in drawing our attention to Christ; but when bodily weariness begins to assert itself, it is entirely proper to change one's position. Hence, prayer may be made while sitting, or standing, or even while walking. Here again the individual must select for himself the posture most conducive to his own meditation.

Apropos of this, there is the story of the old farmer who, when interrogated as to his opinion of the most desirable posture for prayer, retorted: "Well, I don't know. I was leaning over the edge of the well last week when I slipped and went flying down the well head first. I'll tell you, I said the best prayers of my life while dropping down that well standing on my head." Therefore, any posture can be conducive to good meditation. Or, as St. Teresa counsels, a comfortable position that is not too comfortable.

As regards the position of the eyes, common sense should furnish the answer. We definitely will not be able to sustain a conversation with Christ while we are gazing at passers-by or studying the interior of some church. If we make our meditation in a place free

⁴ The presence of Christ's humanity is, naturally, confined to His existence in heaven and in the tabernacles of the world. Yet, His humanity looks on us from afar, and is accordingly present to us. Furthermore, we possess the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity in our soul through grace. And the Second Person, while present only in His divinity, nevertheless, has an habitual relation to His humanity; and in this manner Christ may be said to be present in our souls.

from distracting sights, it might be possible to keep our eyes open and continue our conversation with Christ. But if one is in the midst of distracting movements and sights, the eyes must, of necessity, remain closed. As a general rule, St. Teresa encourages us to keep our eyes always shut during prayer. She notes that this will be extremely difficult at first; but that after a short while, the soul will find itself unable to meditate with the eyes open.

At the beginning of prayer, St. Teresa advises the soul to humble itself before God. This can be simply done by a quick consideration of one's own faults. The rather frightening example of the Pharisee and the Publican comes to mind — "O God, be merciful to me the sinner. . . . this man went back to his home justified rather than the other."⁵ We must not begin talking to God while we are preoccupied with our self-importance — this defect can be combated by the realization of our faults and a humble admission of them.

St. Teresa, in her treatise on prayer, *Way of Perfection*, outlines for us the opening moments of meditation — humble admission of one's weakness and a keen realization of Christ's presence:

As you know, the first thing must be examination of conscience, confession of sin, and the signing of yourself with the Cross. Then, daughter, as you are alone, you must look for a companion — and who could be a better companion than the very Master who taught you the prayer that you are about to say? Imagine that this Lord Himself is at your side and see how lovingly and how humbly He is teaching you — and, believe me, you should stay with so good a friend as long as you can before you leave Him. If you become accustomed to having Him at your side, and if He sees that you love Him to be there, and are always trying to please Him, you will never be able, as we put it, to send Him away, nor will He ever fail you. . . . Do you think it is a small thing to have such a friend as that beside you?⁶

It is of paramount importance, therefore, that at the beginning of our meditation we place ourselves squarely in the presence of Christ, our Friend, who is calling us to a heart-to-heart conversation.

⁵ Lk. 18:14.

⁶ St. Teresa, *Way of Perfection*, Ch. 26.

Mr. Kibildis is an instructor of English at the University of Detroit. Certain aspects of prayer are so momentary that they are almost never mentioned by writers and speakers. But the effects of these incidents may be momentous. So, like Dante, Mr. Kibildis takes us by the hand through the deep realm of prayer, pointing out what might very well be our undoing.

On Certain Aspects of Contemplation

Ralph Kibildis

Fear and Procrastination

DELAY has probably lost more saints and contemplatives for the Church, for God, than any one factor in our culture — that, and fear. Delay because it is so pregnant with promise to ourselves. "Tomorrow and tomorrow" — if I may play with Shakespeare's other meaning. And fear, for there is nothing so exclusively our own as fear. We delay and fear under the scientific disguise of self-preservation. It is true: this is its effectiveness. It is the heart of self-preservation. And contemplation would ask you to give them up for that temporary immolation which has a most uncertain future. Uncertain, only because we cannot penetrate beyond the confines which we have designated as the self. It seems hardly possible to us now that reality is an elastic affair, something which does not perpetuate the static. But we have grown so used to the static. Justifiably, I suppose, for there is no future in absorption. What is more threatening than the thought of a reality that is both boundless and depthless? No prospect here. Our hearts seem almost strangers to this call. I do not blame us; we are not cowards without reason.

Unrestrained Joy in Our Senses

We will run today and build roads, point the way to all those lingering on the highways, shout from the roof tops, surrender to all God's demands, be ill, be charitable, spread ourselves, whatever He wishes. All this, yet meditation is so difficult. Our heart and desires have spread an aura so that the spirit feels out of place. By comparison, silence is so keenly painful. What now? Only this realization that the body and soul *are* two entities. Unity can be all-pervading when the distinction between act and prayer are not so blatantly a contrast, when we can settle all our desires — even the roof-top desire — into an area no larger than the view of the sky outside our window. This is seeing all things in One; this is the ability to rejoice in the wonder of our limitation. The roof tops will come, but only when we have learned to climb, to shout, to act with the fullness of perception which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is the Creator of another kind of world within us. He has the plans. Be content with your view from the window. Exploration starts with limitation — at least then we know we are deepening. The whole sky is at best too big. Breadth comes later.

False Postures

Never assume a posture. First, it strains the body. Even our muscles must be a vehicle of grace. Second, postures have a way of settling into a pose. Have we ever seen a posed saint? Other, of course, than the "sculptural delights" which disfigure our saints today. Third, God does not like to chisel into a heart and face that has settled its wrinkles. Fourth, posturing mocks mortification. Besides, posturing, so difficult a habit to acquire, detracts from the growth of another more valuable habit: the habit of charity.

Faith Is Certain

Blind faith most of the time until He will have it otherwise. How difficult this is to realize, this abdication which you must willingly perform. It all begins there. You dig and prepare, painstakingly uproot and weed, and then sit and wait in that close-

ness of solitude which your abdication has created. But there are fresh winds now and again. It isn't all waiting. Sometimes even the whole landscape becomes clear as the thought that says, "I see and I believe." He is not at all unaware of our frailties. He just wants us to know them the more when He gives us glimpses of the things to come — but "not of this world."

God Is Love

We never really quite understand, even when He leads us by the hand. I think we get lost in His guidance and miss half the glories He points out. But isn't this the way of all lovers? Don't we miss half the words, the connotations, the wonders because our minds are so engrossed in loving? And should it not be this way — at least for now?

We have to keep returning to the fire, especially when the wind is not strong. We need to cup our hands, blow gently, keep it alive. When it blazes, we must step back and admire it for itself — not because we cupped our hands and blew, but because He gave us the hands, the inclination. This is what we should remember when we enter prayer and find it smoldering.

Someone will say to you one day, "You have been graced and gifted. Now what are you going to do about it?" These words will strike terror in your heart as you recall the servant who buried his one talent. Ours is that vast responsibility that weighs on His cross. He carries it; this is our assurance, but we must never forget that He fell under its weight. Was it too heavy a load? That and the fact that He could not speak words which would more effectively show what we must do with our talents. We must bury them in Him.

All the greatest illusions, creative and negative — here I bar none, even those that come straight from the poet's illusory workshop — are as nothing before the stark reality of a heart given in love. No language, no thought supports this. Here we find its greatness, for silence protects its own births and deaths. All one can do is stand in wonder and in awe. It is best this way. It is a preparation for our eternal roles.

If we pass on beyond the confusion of our contrasting helplessness and hopelessness, we have crossed the principal source of

confusion. Helpless when we observe that our hands, at times, must be severed at the wrist, so to speak, with all that glorious clay to mold. Hopeless when we see that even given back our hands our first inclination is to commit them to former duties that take us away from the source of our happiness. Our hands were given to us that we might give them back, folded, creased, worn in that duty which is our blessedness. There is always a return. Teresa has warned us that He will not be outdone in generosity.

We Need the Cross

To be completely crushed — whatever the circumstances, be it illness, deprivation, loneliness, presentiments, and fears of death — that means to be ready to receive life. This is oft repeated among spiritual writers today, almost as if it were our particular role today. It can never lose its truth, however, because in our Redeemer the role of death played so prominent a role. It, above all, stands as the guiding post to any form of triumph or joy. We need not linger in its grip, that would be inviting defeat; we are not that firm in our faith as yet. But that we must glimpse and experience it, there is no other way. We have to pray so that we be graceful under its tutelage. This is what really counts. Near-despair is not despair. This is the distinction that will carry the day. It is beneficently kind.

What a fatal confrontation when we would direct our actions in the Christian way and find no model. I would pass on the words of one of my spiritual guides: take up St. John's Gospel, Chapters 14-17. Here the Model summarizes His life and our work. There is a succinctness and a splendor in His language. It is the language we must learn. And not because it is a language but because it is Truth.

There Is No Such Thing as an Isolated Christian

Can we sing? All of us in a different voice. None of us has really been denied one short glimpse of our range. No man is ever alone in his solitude. Some of us look deeper and sing louder. We cannot quibble about the voice that was given to us. But to say that any one person has no voice: this is to say he is

born dead to poetry, and worse, to say he was stillborn. No one is that crass. All of us believe that somewhere — on a spot of our interior map, no matter how infinitesimal it may be — we have sung so loud and long that God was awakened by our praise. I think all of us have performed once in our lifetime so self-consciously that we defied all the laws of nonidentity. It is to that moment we must return and begin all over again. This time not so self-consciously because we would be assured that we are heard. No man is really “a voice in the wilderness.” Not so long as he knows there is a wilderness. This is the first recognition of that “other self” which is the cause of our voice.

“All Things Are Yours . . .”

There is always some area of our experience that does not come under the sway of God’s hand. It would seem that it is always found in that contradiction which we make between the things of the sense and the things of the spirit. If the truth be known, it is we who are the psychological prudes; it is we who are afraid to include the senses among the things to be sanctified. The Incarnation should here be our infinite meditation. If we would explore the Gospels with this one end, the end of finding Christ’s familiarity and use of the things of the world, we would close that awful gap that we all too lightly conceive between God’s world and God’s image.

Prayerful Conduct

In prayer we are surrounded by silence. That is why our movements seem like a pantomime. And yet, we should not strain to tell Him what we are trying to “mime.” He knows that — and from all eternity. “Before Abraham was . . .”

Never say, “Lord, You cannot fully understand how much You have done for me.” That only means that you do not understand Him thoroughly. When you reach a deeper understanding such expressions will be meaningless to you. It is another bend of the road, the one that leads to pure loving.

Do not keep a journal of your love. Love is not journalized — at least not in the moments of loving. The only excuse you might give for telling your love is that another might fall in love too.

But that is only when you are overflowing. The pen will be put in your hand then. You see, all of it points to a kind of passivity which is guided by Him Who Is.

Doubts will recur seasonably. This is the way we learn — by contrasts. There is something to doubt. So long as you find yourself kneeling in doubt, there should be no ultimate fear. It is when we miss our lover that we run in pursuit of Him. Doubt is a kind of upside-down missing. It is all a strange but lovely part of a love story. Would we have it otherwise?

There is a price for peace. "If you love Me follow My commandments." And for permanency He has hewn these commandments in rock and in His own flesh. This was Christ's fulfillment of the law. He has made it flesh so that we might better know it. Rocks do not weep or suffer or die. He did.

For us, joy is always a fatal premonition of sorrow. That is because we have never known His sorrow. It is the foundation of the world, the creation that was *good*. A thing is good because it *Is*. Can another verb be less expressive of fatality and more expressive of eternity?

We trust ourselves because we know ourselves. This is the logic that makes the unknowable and grace so enigmatic. And it is safer. We are not gamblers when it comes to God's ways. Perhaps because we are afraid we will lose everything. Aren't we repeating Thompson's fallacy? But he did eventually surrender. And we are always confident that there is another knock. We forget the "foolish virgins." We always have some suspicion that He was only telling a story then. We are always confusing His mercy and His justice. Not that He wants to frighten us; He wants, instead, to tell us that love deprived is a fitful evil. We can match this truth from our lives. We consign ourselves to hell in many ways. And all because we trust ourselves.

Self-Knowledge

Contemplatives, for a long while, are some of our greatest actors. The life lends itself to it so easily. The memory and the imagination, once told to conform, can conjure up the most fatal illnesses and the most joyful beatitudes. Not that this is a prerequisite for the contemplative life, but it most often accompanies

it. Only after they have exhausted their roles do they assume a "feet on the earth" and "spirit in the heavens" attitude — as it should be. The ability to see the humor in our fabulous roles, by the way, is a very special grace of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, we sometimes die, positive that we are being assumed into heaven. God forgives even this, if we are consciously striving to renounce the assumption.

The thing that really hurts is to be told we are not suffering for the sins of the world but our own. Or that our restlessness of spirit, which we assume to be the end result of a fatal wound from our Lover, is largely a result of constipation. (This is not irreverence. I am telling tales out of school. This was spoken by a most learned Thomist. Further proving, of course, that Thomism is both transcendental and realistic.)

The most important thing in life, my dear, is to know how to use your brain, even in matters of the heart.

— F. Mauriac

* * *

Be temperate as an athlete of God.

— St. Ignatius of Antioch

* * *

Education is the methodical creation of the habit of Thinking.

— E. Dimnet

* * *

Humility is the ground of all the virtues.

— G. Vann

Contemplative Life . . .

“If there is a country in which the contemplative life is needed, it is surely our young and active republic where the spirit of action pervades all classes. That action, not to become exclusive and absorbing, must be counterbalanced by reflection and contemplation, and it is from the contemplative orders that we learn this spirit of contemplation.

“We echo the sentiments of Holy Church when we exclaim, ‘*Vivat, crescat, floreat vita contemplativa*’ — may the contemplative life live, grow, flourish!”

— JAMES CARDINAL GIBBONS

Everyone knows of Mrs. Doherty's (her husband's name) tireless labor in the field of Catholic Action. Not all are aware of the source of her zeal.

The Contemplative Life and the Lay Apostolate

Catherine de Hueck

WHAT strange things words are. Take the words "do" and "be." How infinite and diverse is their application and interpretation. This article will in a way deal with just them. Showing how in all works of the Lord, the last is first — or perhaps, putting it the other way around, the first is sterile without the last.

It seems to me, that this is a timely article. For in our days the lay apostolate is coming into its own. Friendship House was one of its pioneers on this continent, for it started twenty-five years ago on the feast day of St. Teresa of Ávila, she who better than anyone knew the secrets of *being* before the Lord. We of Friendship House thank her ceaselessly for her gay, simple, and thorough way of teaching us a little of this Teresian "technique," for without it we long ago would have ceased to exist.

Yes, it started all so long ago. In the crucible of the Russian Revolution, when I was but seventeen years old. It started by a fireplace. On our Russian country estate, I and my family were imprisoned by the Communistic tenants on our property. They condemned us to death — to a lingering death by hunger — leaving water and fire to prolong the agony. Putting a sentinel at the door, they waited gleefully for this death of ours.

Death is a great clarifier of minds — even seventeen-year-old

minds. And sitting there by that fire, I asked myself, "What had I (yes, even I) left undone, or done wrongly, that my country had come to this?" And before the clear, shining face of death — the answer came. I had not walked and talked with Christ all the days of my life, as He had wanted me to. Yes, I was a Catholic; confessed at regular times; did not eat meat on Fridays, and gave my *surplus* to the poor. I believed intellectually all the tenets of my faith. I rendered to God adoration, obedience, and service (of a sort). *But I did not make God a part of my daily life: He had only a part of me, but not all of me. And He wanted just that — all of one, freely, voluntarily, lovingly given. Nor did I see His gentle face as clearly as I should have, in my neighbor.*

And, because of this, Communism had come to Russia. Yes, just because of me and my brothers. For when the rich forget to be their brothers' keepers, and think, fools that they are, that they are owners of their wealth, *then revolutions happen.* For, believe it or not, *Communists are not born, they are made by such hypocritical, halfhearted Christians, Catholics included.*

Yes, it all started so long ago — in the crucible of the Russian Revolution by a fireplace.

When I understood, in sorrow and contrition I cried out to the Lord, regretfully, that now when I saw and knew — there was no time to give Him. For gladly, I would have *lived for him* — now that I knew. But it was too late! Or was it? Does the Lord hear the prayers of young teen-age girls easily? He must have, for the fortunes of war turned for a week or so, and we were liberated by armies opposing those of the Communists, and thus able to come to Europe, where my mother and brothers settled, and I, the new Tillie the Toiler, came to America to try to earn a living for all.

The Imperative Work

First job — a laundry at eight dollars a week, then a drab and dreary succession of factory work, waitress' job, saleslady. And then a break, followed soon by another. Finally security again, almost new wealth and with it restlessness; because of a fireplace, the face of death, and a promise to God!

Finally the duty of providing for the family lifted through cir-

cumstances, and with it came the freedom to be poor again. Give up all jobs, all newly acquired wealth, and arise to fulfill that promise.

A diocese, a bishop, a blessing from him, and Friendship House was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on the feast day of St. Teresa of Ávila, October 15, 1930. Six years later another branch of it opened its doors in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and on St. Valentine's day in 1938 the first American Friendship House came into being in Harlem, New York City. In 1942, November 5, Blessed Martin De Porres' feast day, Chicago's Friendship House began to function. Four houses in fourteen years — God was good! Officially, Friendship Houses in the community are known as Settlement Houses, but in the sight of God and the Church they are more. For those who man them, they are *a way of life*. These people are known as Friendship House staff workers and form the inner circle of the work, as it were. True and real, *the vocation to the lay apostolate, Friendship-House style, is their vocation*.

Though they endeavor to be all things to all men, to restore both to Christ, as is the great desire of the holy pontiffs, their main work in the U.S.A. is that of interracial justice. Friendship Houses in New York City and Chicago work exclusively with the Negro, and for that end.

In order to achieve this, they make use of all Christian techniques. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are practiced with a Franciscan simplicity, and with the minimum record-keeping possible. Catholic adult education, Catholic lending libraries, recreational facilities for adults and children embracing the spiritual, educational, athletic, and social aspects of same. Credit unions, co-operatives, back-to-the-land movements, unionism, labor schools, social work, information centers, all are brought to serve this principal end.

From the very first day of the foundation, the staff workers received no salary for their work, desiring to be poor in fact as well as in spirit, taking for their example the identification of Christ with the poor and realizing that voluntary poverty, naturally in their case without vows, but nevertheless complete, was a way of atonement for the greed of those who had forgotten to be their brother's keeper, a life pleasing to God, and one that would inevi-

tably gain for them the confidence of the poor, with and for whom they worked.

Eligible to this inner-circle group are all Catholics — men, women, and married childless couples — between the ages of 21 and 35. Race, nationality, education, or lack of it are no bar to admission. Chastity and obedience they view, as all Catholics should, fully and comprehensibly, but again without vows. Such then briefly are the works and vocation of Friendship House staff workers.

Yes, and it started all so long ago and far away: in the crucible of the Russian Revolution, by a fireplace, before the calm face of death. But St. Teresa of Ávila had a big job on her hands. For evidently the shadows of the full years in the midst of the world, that came and went so swiftly between that day at the fireplace and October 15, 1930, had again blurred my clear vision of things eternal.

For a little band of five fools for Christ's sake, who, selling all they possessed, taking up their cross and following me into the slums of Toronto to start the first Friendship House, were embued, as I myself was, with the spirit of "*doing*" — a disease known to spiritual writers and doctors as "*actionitis*" — and a virulent and dangerous disease it is.

Naturally, daily Mass and Communion were the prayer foundation. For that much we knew, that it was *in Him, through Him, and with Him alone*, that our Little Portiuncula would bear fruits. But what an attendance at Mass! Hurried — filled with private devotional prayers or the rosary, barely waiting for the last Gospel to be read, for there was so much to *do* — wasn't there?

A quick breakfast, and on to work. Meals to cook for the Brother Christophers. It was depression time and Friendship House in Canada served 40,000 meals per year. Begging for the meals of tomorrow to do. Letters to write; clothing to give out. Programs to prepare; children to take care of, 700 of them. Faster — faster — meditation, we heard, was good for the soul! But who in Friendship House had a minute to spare? Faster — faster — there was work to *do* for the Lord. Meetings at night to attend; literature to distribute; lectures to give; programs again for adult education to make. Labor schools to start; co-operatives and credit unions to build; study clubs to organize! poor to visit; sick to console;

ignorant to enlighten — *faster — faster — there was so much to do and so little time to do it all in!*

The Indispensable Source

A quiet priest mentioned contemplative prayer. What was that? Did he think we were mystics? We had no time for levitations, no sir! Faster, faster. Maybe a dash for a minute into some church we were passing on the way from one work to another — yes, we could and did rush in and rush out again after a genuflection and a hurried “Hello” to the Lord.

Weren’t we busy about *His Father’s business* — weren’t we lay people and without any vows, just Marthas of the Lord — wasn’t it enough that we spend 10–12–14 hours a day working, *doing* things for Him. A sign of the cross before going to bed was good enough. Particular or general examination of conscience? Yes, we read something about that, but that was all fine for nuns and priests. We did not have time.

And so it went. We wonder now what St. Teresa of Ávila thought of us, who started on her feast day so well from the wrong foot. Did she beckon St. John of the Cross to come and talk things over with her in some shady, quiet part of heaven’s garden? Or did she decide that it was a strictly private business of her own?

Yes, that was how it started with us of Friendship House, many years ago. Then things began to happen. Where there should have been peace and harmony, there was restlessness and arguments. People, other than the original five, came and went. Many came, many were of good will, but something drove them away, and even the “originals” began to feel the strain.

But what was more, the works were strangely unsatisfactory, or perhaps their results were. Oh, meals grew. Attendance at all activities could not be better. Kids were taken off the streets in ever growing numbers. Juvenile delinquency dropped noticeably in the neighborhood. The poor were clothed, fed, and helped. Yes, all this was going on increasing and multiplying, driving us ever faster and faster into the vortex of a life of superaction. But inner peace there was none! Why?

Then came a retreat. St. Teresa must have sent the retreat master herself. For in limpid words of holy simplicity he presented us

with a picture of an ideal lay worker in the apostolate of the Lord's vineyard. He left us a book which became our second Bible, three copies falling apart because of such perusal: *The Soul of the Apostolate*, by Dom Chautard.

Slowly, painstakingly the little seed planted by holy priestly hands grew. Other servants of the Lord came and the furrows of our minds became tilled and soft, receptive to the truth of God, slowly bearing its fruit under the vigilant eye of St. Teresa of Ávila, the superb gardener of God's special garden of souls.

And the words "*to be before the Lord*" took flesh in our minds, and taking flesh began also taking precedence before that other word "*to do for the Lord.*" We had paid the price of this knowledge and now it was ours.

It started with Mass. Where there had been hurry, distraction, impatience, came the holy three — silence, recollection, and quietude. And from them grew love and understanding of what the Mass was. Whom it brought us, how we could be part of it, *participate* in it. Preparation for it started the night before. Thanksgivings lengthened and overflowed with reverence and gratitude. *The Mass and the lay apostolate* became our daily meditation.

The Mass led to the Liturgy in a broader sense, and staff workers began saying the day hours. All now and always will recite Compline, the evening prayer of the Church right after supper, publicly in their workplaces, thus inviting the passer-by, friends, and visitors to join them and learn to pray with the Church. Some went further, saying Prime, some the other hours, and some again went the whole way reciting the Breviary. Thus Friendship House began laying firm and lasting foundations in the Liturgy fulfilling the primary duty of *all Christians: that of adoring our Lord, constantly, joyously, befittingly!*

Before we knew it, on quiet feet my Lady Meditation had come in, and made herself one of us. Wisely and gently she took first little space and less time. Maybe ten, fifteen minutes every morning, when breakfast and the housework were done, and before the heat of the day's work came rushing in. Her voice was soft and low — but oh, the light she brought to bear on God's truths, that had become trite to us, who knew so little of their infinite, endless beauty and variety. We fell in love with her, and even unto now

and probably for as long as Friendship House, its staff workers, and its way of life last, we shall love her more and more, and give her all the possible and allotted time, and then sneak in a few minutes more.

Mass, the liturgical hours, the little vocal prayers that all God's children whisper as they go through life, and meditation brought clarity and sense into a new vocation, a new apostolate, that had its beginnings in the dream of a girl of seventeen that looked at the face of death and saw the holy face of God and for an instant caught His staggering loveableness and beauty. And that took its cue from the request of the Vicars of Christ, but had to look for a precedent far, far back into the dimness of centuries, way back to the first Christians, who had so many lay apostles, but so little data about their mode of life, work, etc.

But it brought more. It brought slowly, awesomely, the terrible, tragic, almost killing realization of *what sin was, its enormity. The price it exacted. The Incarnation. The Passion. The Redemption of our Lord.* These truths hit us like a bolt of lightning and nearly prostrated us. Now we knew our utter weakness, now we saw our complete nothingness. Gone was the urge to do, gone was the pride of accomplishment, gone were the desires for results, gone was the first flush of shallow enthusiasms. Now our eyes began to open, and we knew that, as we went on, the sight would become plainer and harder to bear. The cross and its meaning loomed ever larger and larger until it filled our horizon and nearly crushed us.

For a great fear took hold of our souls, slowed our steps, darkened our minds. We saw our weakness, saw the Mystery of Iniquity, and, for an instant or two, we faltered. But St. Teresa of Ávila had laid her foundation well in us; and now we firmly believe she showed us the other side of this new and dark vista.

We also understood that there was *only one way to God*, for the laity, as well as for those who wish to serve Him in the great and varied vocations of the religious and priestly life. The Trappists, Carmelites, and all other holy men and women *and we* had to walk the same road, read the same signposts, use the same staffs. It was only a matter of width, depth, height, and acceptance of same with or without vows. At times we had to take the spirit only, and they both the letter and the spirit. As in holy poverty no

matter how completely *we lay apostles* or folks practiced its spirit and integration, it was not, it could not be as complete, as great, as that of the consecrated ones. But it was the highest that God desired *us* to practice, and so the best for *us*.

Thus the counsels of perfection, the beatitudes were ours as they were theirs, each according to the call and graces God gave to each. And seeing this we took heart for here the road was trodden by many feet and the way was clear. We had started well on chastity, obedience, and poverty, according to our lay state, and we had begun at the beginning of the prayer life; and that led us to lift our faces upward and away from the world and its sin — up — up toward God, and we saw light behind the cross, the light of the Resurrection, and our hearts sang out the *Magnificat* that merged into a *Te Deum*. *And we went on.*

And, going on, we learned to shorten the time, not only to live in a little space of it between *two Masses* as we had already been doing for a while, but to go apart and rest at His feet for a moment or two in the middle of the day. Thus refreshing our souls, filling them up for whatever the afternoon would bring; usually much misery and pain to alleviate, and souls to nurse back to health. We were glad we had taken time and gone to Him.

At first because it was all so new, so strange, and our spiritual feet were learning to walk in a strange land, our postlunch visits to the Blessed Sacrament in our parish church were filled with talks to God. Our souls were not yet used to silence, God's and our own, but our hearts cried out for it. Slowly we were learning — "to look at God and let God look at us." We are still learning and we shall continue to do so until we die, for the silence of the Lord is so full and so infinite, and we know now that our souls hunger for it and only in silence find their earthly rest.

Surely, now we had put our house in order and all was well with us. And, in a manner of speaking, so it was. Peace had come to stay. New workers came and if they left it was either to become priests (we have fourteen such from Friendship House), or nuns, or Brothers (we have six of these), or then again to marry and build real Catholic homes, which in turn were anchored in daily Mass, Communion, Liturgy, interracial justice, and a deep and profound understanding of God's and the Church's laws and ways and a

great love and obedience for same. We have eight such marriages. God be praised! And those who stayed at Friendship House, so their spiritual directors said, grew in wisdom and grace.

So it seemed that we had reached the full spiritual formation, the final and lasting one of our apostolate, Friendship-House style. But human hearts are strange and ours suddenly cried out loudly: "I have need to busy my heart with quietude." For the day is long and the heat thereof intense and the labor exacting.

Is there a need of the soul the Lord leaves unfilled? Never. And retreats became our joy. First one of three days' duration, then hungrily we asked for more. Days of recollection followed. First two a year, then four, now they come monthly. And then we had our first eight-day retreat.

Yes, St. Teresa showed us that we are fountains, that must first and always be filled, filled with God to overflowing and then, and only then, spill over unto the parched earth of our Portiuncula; for unless we are, all our tilling and laboring will bear no fruit, for of ourselves we are nothing; only in Him, through Him, for Him, with Him can we really bring His gracious grace into a hungry world.

And now we have put the words *be* and *do* in their proper sequence and made clear their meaning. Friends of the lay apostolate, friends of the laity, who live busy lives in the world but do not wish to be of it, take a leaf out of the book of our experiences and start right now. You will save yourselves many heartaches, and you will find the pastures of the Lord sweet and green. And what is more you will fall in love with God and really make your life, whatever state is yours, a glorious adventure with Him, for the prayer of love will take with you, as it now takes with us, precedence over every other occupation; then you will be safe. For nothing will disturb you, nothing affright you. You will know that all things are passing and that only God remaineth. And knowing this you will be joyous and filled with peace; His peace that no one can take away from you.

We of Friendship House thank St. Teresa of Ávila and rejoice that Friendship Houses are hers too because they were started on her feast day, thus making the greatest contemplative the patroness of the lay apostolate, Friendship-House style. Thank you, St. Teresa.

Father Magsam is preparing for publication one of the finest and most complete commentaries of the Missal we have ever seen. He bases his teaching (at the Maryknoll Seminary in Bedford, Mass.) on the richest and most valid sources of all education — Scripture and Liturgy. This article is no exception to that wise technique.

Mary and the Mass

Father Charles M. Magsam, M.M.

EVERY thought of our Lady returns us to her Son. And the work of our Lady and her Son is centered in the Mass. For Calvary is not a distant memory to us but always a tremendous moment. Christ lives it on each altar at the beginning of each day or in the evening. But we are always aware that He goes on living it at every moment on some other altar as the spinning earth turns mile after mile of its surface to be lighted and warmed by the sun.

The Mystical Body

At those altars and around those altars, sometimes stealthily improvised, stand the missionaries and heroic priests in prisons, our apostolic brothers and sisters in Christ. And with them are the Christians who have been brought to Jesus and His Mother through prayers and sacrifices and missionary work. At Mass we are most intimately one great family, most obviously one in Christ. Distances mean nothing. Close to our Lord, we are close to each other. As Pius XII says in his encyclical on the Mystical Body: "The more we become 'members one of another,' 'mutually one for another,' the closer we shall be united with God, with Christ; as on the other hand the more ardent the love that binds us to God and our divine Head, the closer we shall be united to each other in the bonds of charity."¹

¹ *Mystici Corporis*, N.C.W.C. edition, par. 73.

That is why it is so right that the world should pour its troubles in the lap of worship and prayer and ask that the members of Christ take the world's distress and heal it in the infinite mediatorship of Christ exercised by the Head and participated in by His members.

Everyone has at times the experience of sinners confiding as if in God Himself, even though the confidant knows himself to be weak and wounded with sin. Anyone may be asked to give strength to others when he feels at times his own helplessness and inconstancy. Anyone may be asked to speak or write of the love of God when only by will power in the midst of spiritual darkness, is it possible to keep alive the flame of love in one's own heart.

"I do not the good that I wish, but the evil that I do not wish, that I perform . . . I am delighted with the law of God according to the inner man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind."²

But no one, least of all a Christian, has the right to throw up his arms in despair. Never for a minute may a person step out of his Christian character. There is no such thing as a process of "unbaptism." Pius XII speaks of this "deep mystery: that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penances which members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ offer for this intention."³

In other words, the Christian road we walk leads only in one direction. It is a straight road and it goes up to Calvary and to the tomb of resurrection. There is no legitimate road of return.

We Belong on Calvary

Every Christian goes up to Calvary by baptismal dedication to Christ and to His work. And as he goes he burns behind him all the bridges that lead away from Calvary, all the bridges of sin. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."⁴ "All we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death."⁵

² Rom. 7:19-23.

³ *Mystici Corporis*, N.C.W.C. edition, par. 44.

⁴ Lk. 9:23.

⁵ Rom. 6:3.

"Always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame."⁶ "If we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also."⁷

The only way to come down from Calvary is by the road of sin. Sin is always a turning of one's back on the crucifixion of God. It is an escape from Calvary, from the salvation of the world and from the salvation of one's own soul. It is a flight from the company of Jesus and Mary.

By Baptism and by every apostolic and religious dedication, a person is committed to stay on Calvary. No Christian can go away and leave our Lord hanging alone on the cross, with only His Mother beside Him. Everyone belongs there because he has been called and signed and sealed for that cruel place. Everyone belongs there because Christ wants his company and co-operation. Everyone belongs there because he wants to be there with Jesus and His Mother.

We Must Learn

But no one comes suddenly to the Calvary of conscious dedication. It takes a long time to learn what Baptism means. It is one of the principal objects of the new Easter Vigil service to help us understand and to live the meaning of Baptism, to see that it is so intimately a preparation for the Calvary of Mass. As we grow in the fervor of Christian Life, that consciousness becomes more vivid. In the same way, it takes a long time to prepare for a conscious adult consecration of life to Jesus and Mary.

Our Blessed Mother did not suddenly come upon her Calvary. There were the moments of pain all along. Holy Simeon had warned her of them. And the flight into Egypt, the massacre of the Innocents, the loss of her Boy in the Temple told her something of what Simeon meant. After He left Nazareth and began preaching, the news came back to her that Jesus talked of the sufferings and death that He must endure. All that she had meditated in the Psalms and in Isaias was suddenly an urgent, present,

⁶ 2 Cor. 4:10.

⁷ Rom. 6:5.

and personal thing, centered in her Son. And it was not something that was just happening to Him; He said that He was deliberately choosing His ordeal. "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from me; but I lay it down of myself."⁸ Mary knew that He chose to hide His divine power when He walked into the hands of His enemies and let them do as they would.

Then there was that way of the cross when the two most lonely persons on earth met and looked at one another in utter inconsolable loneliness. There was nothing either one could do about it. There was only the love and the courage to witness and endure.

It was the same on Calvary. In spite of her love, Mary could not help at all. And she suffered the more deeply because of her very love and helplessness. But at least she was a note of tenderness in that cruel, bloody place, a contradiction to the mockery and hatred that eddied in black tides around her.

Mary's Calvary

Mary's presence on Calvary makes her a part of every renewal of Calvary in the Mass. As it was for her Son, so it was for the Mother, the climax of what they suffered together for the redemption of the world. The offering she made of Him there she continues to make in every Mass. And it is a wise preparation for Mass, and a helpful thought during Mass, to ask Mary to give us her mind and heart and will so that we can offer her Son to the Father through her hands. We feel her presence there very much. As history has it, there was no Calvary without the Mother.

Another thing, on the first Calvary John stood for all of us, as Leo XIII and Pius XI have said, when Jesus gave John to His Mother to be her son. St. Pius X even said that we all rested with her Son beneath the heart of Mary and were born of her with Him who is our Head. This union of all in Him was declared to the world from the cross. She was to be the Mother of everyone whom the Trinity, through her Son, would adopt as sons and daughters, the generations upon generations who would call her blessed when they called her Mother.

⁸ Jn. 10:17-18.

Were it not for this new prolific life born out of her Son's death, the *Magnificat* of Mary might have seemed like a terrible illusion. Where could be the joy, where the gratitude that welled up within her as she stood on Elizabeth's doorstep? In actual fact, her *Magnificat* remained true, not only in spite of Calvary but precisely through Calvary. The lamentations of Calvary, so strictly and invariably intoned at every Jewish death, would be the song of the suffering members of Christ through all generations. All sorrow for sin and all suffering would feel at home on Calvary with the crucified Redeemer. God would be faithful to His promises. He would fill the hungry with good things.

Our Lady's *Magnificat* is forever echoed in the Calvary of each Mass. The Saviour's worth we celebrate. God has indeed done great things. As St. Paul says, "Jesus, having offered one sacrifice for sins, has taken his seat forever at the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified. Thus also the Holy Spirit testifies unto us . . . 'Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.'"⁹ The bloody, messy cruelty, the hatred and mockery of Calvary are not visible in the sacramental offering of the Mass. And they do not need to be. The reparation is complete in the Person of Christ. But He wills that the one sacrifice of reparation be renewed to the end of the world. The application of Calvary takes place especially through the sacraments.

Thanksgiving for Calvary

The ends of the Mass which are given special prominence are adoration and praise of God and thanksgiving for the graces of redemption. So Mary's thoughts in the *Magnificat* are constantly recurring in the Mass. The very name "Eucharist" means thanksgiving. It is truly a celebration of thanksgiving and of praise. It is Mary again giving us her mind, her heart, her will. She sang first her thanksgiving and then praised the mercy, the power, the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises. As she sang her hymn of thanksgiving and praise in the majestic parallelism of Hebrew poetry, we sing our thanksgiving and praise in the majestic

⁹ Hebr. 10:12, 14, 17.

cadences of Chant. As Mary sang her thanksgiving that God had kept His promise and sent a Saviour, we sing our thanksgiving that the Saviour is with us all days even to the consummation of the world, offering Himself at every moment through one of His ministers and through the members of the Mystical Body.

Mary and the Mass

There is another thing that makes our Lady so much a part of every Mass, and that is Holy Communion. There was no Communion on Calvary, of course. And by the will of God she was not at the Last Supper to be the first to receive her Son under the form of bread and wine. But on Calvary Jesus committed His mother to a newly ordained priest. (He might have entrusted her to Salome. He surely knew that John would be a busy Apostle and bishop.) Thereafter, when John renewed the Calvary Sacrifice, through the anointed hands of John, Mary became again the immaculate tabernacle of her Son and her God. With the fervor of each Communion, more and more her union with Jesus became like the living union of the divine and human natures in Him, and even like the life-oneness of the Trinity.

Dispensing all graces that come to us through Mass and Communion, Mary is with us, wanting to give us her mind and heart and will so that we will receive her Son with something of the spiritual profit that came to her. Asking her for such a favor is one of the ways of living our consecration to her and of keeping our childlike dependence upon her. In moments of distraction we can ask her to let us think of her Son.

One of the natural things to ask of Mary is to request something of her mind and heart and will as we offer each Mass through the hands of the celebrant and offer ourselves as covictims with Christ. In the offering of the Mass, everyone can feel that Mary is the leader of our worship. Even though she was greater in dignity than St. John, because she was the Mother of God, Mary did not have the priestly character and could not bring her Son to earth under the form of bread and wine. But when St. John offered Mass in her presence, our Lady could penetrate more deeply than the celebrant into the mysteries of the altar. Better even than John, she knew that her Son is always the principal Offerer as well

as Victim in each Mass and that the heart of each Mass is the offering made in her Son's heart. She knew that when the world would be ended and the Mass would not need again to be offered, the inner offering of her Son would go on forever, not as reparation or petition but as thanksgiving and praise; for He would be for eternity the Head of the Mystical Body worshiping the Trinity.

In the Mass of St. John that Mary offered with him and with her Son, she prayed as the mediatrix and coredemptrix of the world. The prayer she gave us at Fatima was in her heart then: "O my Jesus, lead all souls to heaven. Help especially those who are most in need." She prayed especially for the work of the Apostles and for their courage under suffering, just as she prays for our courage under suffering. She was the perfect victim-soul and offered all that she herself suffered, especially on Calvary.

In her heart the burning of Calvary's pain would never cease. And each Mass was not a simple ritual but a vivid renewal of all the horrors and the blood and the blasphemies of those dark hours. To her mother's heart it was all as clear and real as two minutes ago. That Mass of St. John, with Mary present at it, was the most perfect reliving of Golgatha that could ever be. And the giving back to Mary of her Son's living Flesh was the completion of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Resting again in His Mother's immaculate being, Jesus found the perfect rest and perfect love that He always seeks.

The Mass Our Calvary

We ask our Lady to make us at home on Calvary. We have to be at home there because we stand on a Calvary of our own making. At every Mass we come again to a Calvary that we have made. It is always a living Calvary, alive with Christ the Victim and alive with our personal sins. It is not something that happened in a dead and forgotten past. The sins of 2000 years before Christ were no more and no less present to the Father than the sins of 2000 years after Christ. We do not point fingers at other people. It is not the sins of somebody else. It is our own sins that put Him to death. His death is our doing. Through His death each of us has the grace to be a prodigal returning to the Father, if only for a single venial sin.

All foolish human pride ought to break against the crucifix. How can we be proud as we stand before the crucified Son of God and know that we have been His murderers? We can face that awful fact only because we know that God's murdered Son has already forgiven us and by His very death gives us new life, even eternal life. We can face it because we know that Mary stands there with us, pleading our forgiveness and pleading for grace. She makes her own the words of her Son, "Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."¹⁰ By the grace she obtains for us, her Son's crucifixion becomes a call to sorrow and repentance and atonement.

But we also know still that He is showing us the cost of mediatorship and victimhood. We might cry out against that cost and say that it is too much, if it were not for the woman who stood there on Calvary, the woman who was the most innocent of all, most involved of all because His Mother, immaculately sinless and yet suffering the cost of redemption with her Son more keenly than anyone. She suffered with her Son in order to give life to the world.

That is our great hope. Calvary is not a hopeless, bloody, meaningless mess. It is not merely a death but also a birth that we have part in. Because that death accomplishes our redemption, it is our life, our sweetness, and our hope. So in each Mass and through the day we remain on Calvary with Mary who is our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

"O God who in a wonderful manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more wonderfully hast renewed it, grant that . . . we may be made partakers of His divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ Thy Son." Mary was the one most nobly created, and with her Son she renews the world.

¹⁰ Lk. 23:34.

Reading, thinking, praying is not enough for a vigorous spiritual life. Decisive and definite action is also required. It may even mean uprooting your life. Abraham had to move to Haran, which was 400 miles north of Ur, his home. Elias had to go hide himself by the torrent of Carith, which was over against the Jordan. Joseph Dever, and his family, had to go to Colorado.

Together

Joseph Dever

*"Pray that your flight
may not be in the winter . . ."*

DOROTHY DAY once wrote that the greatest happiness a human being can find in this world lies in Christian family life.

I think most young parents sense this truth but are not profoundly and humbly aware of it until they receive a shock of recognition along the sinuous ways of existence.

I submit that I received my first great shock of recognition as a parent when (with my wife's consent and approval) I closed up a fancy duplex apartment in Chicago, sold our furniture, lashed our residual belongings into a two-wheel wooden trailer and took Mama and the three children off to the Colorado hills.

Of its nature, the excellent public-relations job I had in the Chicago Loop dangerously widened the gap between me and my family and left me little or no time to work on a novel-in-progress. My job was just too vital, glamorous, and consuming to allow for normal home life and the detachment that is needed for creative work.

And when, after much tortured self-examination, I decided to abandon it all in a desperate bid for the resumption of full family life and creative work, I was overwhelmed with gratitude to learn

that my good, lovely, and patient wife was with me 100 per cent.

The time of our going was a bitter, sleety day in early November. Winter comes early in Chicago, and its lacerating arrival made the loading of our trailer, with little or no help, a huge and exacerbating task.

Pausing on the porch with a box of odds and ends I recall how ludicrous our little 60-horsepower Ford appeared with the large, deep wooden trailer hooked onto the rear bumper. With our mattresses, boxes, and duffle towering higher and higher, it almost seemed as if the trailer would come crashing down on our little gray chariot.

Perhaps it seems ridiculously sentimental to feel the way we do about our 1938 flivver, but in its herculean performance from Chicago to southwestern Colorado — hauling an overloaded trailer all the way — we seemed to see a concrete answer to our prayers to Christ and our Lady for our safety.

It may well be that the drama of the moment at which we finally walked out of our beautiful home in Chicago into a vast unknown is only of subjective importance — as perhaps is this whole piece. In any case, we were filled with fear and a strong tug of bitterness as, the family snugly seated, I lashed down the tarpaulin over the trailer load for the last time, checked the hitching attachment, and climbed into the “pilot’s” seat.

We hadn’t the slightest idea what would happen to the load behind us once we eased into first and started rolling. A few neighbors waved at us gallantly from surrounding porches as our back wheels dug for traction. I could hear my wife and two older children intoning a Hail Mary. With a screech and a lurch which we feared might lift us into the air on our two back wheels, we began to roll on and out of our life in Chicago to the roomy prairies of Iowa and Kansas.

I never knew how much a father could love his family until that moment. For their safety — and with frightfully limited resources — I had to be Lindbergh, Davy Crockett, and “Papa” of the Swiss Family Robinson all rolled into one.

By temperament, it is hard for me to be humble — most of my humility comes out of humiliation. But at that moment I asked God with all the intensity of my being to help me bring my wife and

three babies safely to Colorado. I believed profoundly that I was doing the right thing in taking this extreme means of trying to get close to my family and to my typewriter again. Our prayers for safety and well-being were answered all the way.

After a bleak, black eight-hour drive, which ended near midnight, we arrived at Marycrest College in Davenport. There Reverend Mother Superior and our dear friend Sister Mary Joanne of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary housed us, fed us, and warmed us with their boundless Christian love.

In the early morning we took to the highway again, slowly, steadily, the great weight swaying always ominously behind us. We climbed the lordly heights above the Mississippi, the gears clashed and strained on the descent, and we knew we were in for trouble.

We had the transmission replaced at St. Joseph, Missouri, where we stayed with Kathleen Morrow and her gracious mother. Then the little Ford assailed the hills again with the great weight swaying behind.

The children, by this time, were becoming veteran travelers and discussed the prospect of seeing Grandpa in Colorado with marvelous aplomb. There were firm if vague references to "Daddy's book" as the reason for all this.

And I could not help but think that eventually there would be more than one critic who might say: "He shouldn't have gone to all that bother!"

We approached interminable Kansas by way of Atchison where, in the providence of God, we were the guests of the twin Benedictine colleges. My wife and the children stayed overnight with the nuns at her alma mater, St. Scholastica's. And I was led off to the monastery at St. Benedict's.

It was a great privilege indeed in a time of such anxiety to lie in a monastic cell chanting prime not long after dawn. I wanted to go into the chapel with them; but, in my exhaustion from the road, it would have taken a re-enactment of the Lazarus story to bring me forth.

At breakfast in the refectory I found myself sitting next to the famous Arnold Lunn who seemed at the time very much concerned about the Pope's latest message to the religious orders.

I was about to ask him if, with his rich background as a mountaineer, he might not want to help me get my rig over the Rockies. But his concern with the implications of the Pope's message for the contemplative orders made my odyssey seem like a very minor problem.

On, on again into Kansas and the endless flat contours. On and on to the Colorado border where we gave three cheers in a dusty western town that dozed in the midday sun and was not at all impressed by the conquests of our 60-horsepower Ford.

Then the last great climb over Wolf Creek Pass, the last great squeaking and swaying, before the descent into the lush San Luis Valley where Grandpa awaited us with a roaring hearth and a well-stocked larder.

We were there — the noble, snow-capped mountains all around us, the artesian wells gurgling, cattle lowing, sun shining even through sudden spates of snow. We were there with the family, our precious few belongings, the manuscript, the diminutive gray Ford.

We knelt that night in Grandpa's rude yet homey cabin and thanked God for bringing us safely across the plains and mountains.

We bedded down in a neighboring cabin, the night around us majestic with mountain calm.

We were together — home! We slept.

To love the good is to possess the good.

— E. Gilson

Temperateness is not the absence of passion, it is the transfiguring of passion into wholeness.

— G. Vann

BOOK REVIEWS

MEDITATIONS OF A BELIEVER, by Marcel Légaut,
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 277 pp.

Here. Let us open to any page of this French peasant's book which is at once so tremendous and delicate, so basic and yet so mysteriously compelling:

"How I wanted to grasp you, my true being, who were so elusive, who escaped so easily! And I was so distracted by confusing mirages, so strangely separated from what I really am.

"Often in the evening after a great deal of work, pouring myself out in all sorts of desires and wishes, I felt so empty of my true being. It flowed on continually, inexorably, its essence unique and irreplaceable; it flowed over me like a torrent streaming over the rock in its bed; and I often feared that I should never be able to possess it.

"But I could not accept the fact that I was a stranger to myself, and after being worn out by repeated failure, I renewed my hopes.

"But how could I grasp my essential being so that I finally might become my true self? What have I not done to reach my essence, unlimited by space or form?"

Légaut goes on to describe the futility of certain of his efforts — activity, the contemplation of beauty, the rejection of all he knew was not himself, his wanting to resort to violence which only made his prison "all the more solid." Then:

"Finally I attempted to reach my true self in my despair, and for a moment I believed that in the depths of all sorrows essential to existence the true self can be grasped. I have since learned, however, that that is possible only in the homicidal negation of one's very self, and as the suicide experiences in his last moments the euphoria of life, so I saw that at the moment of being swallowed up by the abyss of nothingness, when I was being separated from everything, I tasted real being."

Our random opening put us on page 120. The book is as dynamic through all 277 pages. And this excerpt gives only a hint of the heights and depths opened to us by these meditations which are in ways reminiscent of Pascal's *Pensées* and Father Sertillanges' *Reflections*.

And the question certainly arises, though it is a minor concern in relation to the journey that is the book: What manner of man is this Légaut? Surely, the meditations tell us a great deal about his clear-

headedness and his soul on fire. But that which is not in the book is of interest too, and adds conviction to the writer's beckoning.

Légaut is a professor turned peasant. He turned from the world of the university and the city to the harsh life of the country where solitude, poverty, humility, and hard work help to shape the whole man. It is in keeping with the doctrine of renunciation which becomes the theme of his book. It is also the natural extension of his life's direction as a student — one of retreat for intellectual research and the intensifying of the spiritual life. Of course, people have followed him to les Granges de Lesches, so that there again Légaut, with his professor's head and his farmer's hands, leads the intellectual exchanges, the spiritual meditations.

The book is more than meditations on the real self. George N. Shuster, who has written the Foreword, suggests it may be the modern sequel to the *Imitation of Christ*. Indeed, we follow Christ with Légaut through these pages, and we see new dimensions in the familiar scenes, for they are bathed in a new light — the brilliance of the peasant-professor's mind. Here is a book to read — every page, every word; and to dwell on.

William A. McNamara, Providence, R. I.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS, by Caryll Houselander, Sheed & Ward, New York, 173 pp., \$2.75

E. Pascal said: "Christ is in agony until the end of the world: we must not rest in the meantime." He means that the everlasting battle between Christ and Satan, between the Mystical Body of Christ and the evil forces of the world will go on until the end. He means also, strange to say, that the end depends upon us: not the ultimate Christian triumph, which is already secured "in Christ," but the time of the end. We can hasten the final victory. It depends upon how we spend ourselves in His service: the alertness of our minds (Christ-consciousness), the love in our hearts (Christlikeness), and the vigor of our lives (Christ-centered).

The Way of the Cross is such a universal devotion that it has been erected in all of our churches and has helped not a few Catholics to lead vigorous Christlike lives.

Caryll Houselander has written a book wherein she portrays the

meaning of each station. She does it cogently, lucidly, artfully — by words and pictures.

She begins where this review began: with Pascal's idea. She says: Christ did not choose His Passion only to suffer it in His own human nature—tremendous though that would have been — but in order to offer it in the suffering of each one of His members through all ages, until the end of time" (p. 4).

Station after station we come face to face with the contemporary Christ; and stunned by the irresistible attraction of Him who said: "I am the Way," we renounce everything and follow Him. We see Christ in ourselves and our neighbors and learn to know that we are responsible for the whole world. This day, work, this ignoble person is our passion. But God is our strength. Christ did not take away our cross; thereby depriving us of an opportunity for greatness. He lends us His Hand, thus promising glory. Now we "can die His death, with His courage, His love, His power to redeem" (p. 138).

It is such a neat, handy little book, you might take it along to church with you and make the stations, book in hand. Not all at once. Try just one station a day. At the end of fourteen days you will have one more for Christ than Veronica who came forth to wipe the sweats of suffering from His royal countenance. And Christ will have one more for you as He imprints His image on your soul — an image more real, effective, and lasting than Veronica's veil.

Caryll Houselander died on October 12, 1954, at the age of 53. Countless individuals will find new life in the fresh, wonderful insights that books like this contain.

Father William, O.C.D., Boston, Mass.

OD, A WOMAN, AND THE WAY, by Rev. M. Raymond,
O.C.S.O.,

The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1955, 159 pp., \$3.50

We who live in a world that is groping in darkness, quaking with fear, and reeling from pain — physical, mental, but mostly spiritual — need the guidance, example, and inspiration that Mary, the Mother of God, can bring. She is, as we repeat every day, "our life, our sweetness, and our hope." She provides us with this hope and inspiration in a very particular way in her Seven Sorrows. That is why this new book from

the active pen of Father Raymond is so welcome, for it presents us with a powerful and memorable view of the Sorrowful Mother. What causes this book to stand out among others in its class is its double-pronged excellence, for we have not only a series of penetrating word pictures of Mary in her sufferings, but also some unforgettable scraped-ink drawings illustrating each of the sorrows. The artist responsible for these drawings is John Andrews, a man of considerable talent and keen spiritual discernment. One can only hope that his work will continue to be seen and appreciated by larger audiences. No one can remain unmoved in the presence of these intense drawings. When we look at the white hands of Mary as presented in these drawings they speak to us with surprising force and eloquence.

Father Raymond writes with his customary enthusiasm and energy. In the early part of the book his comments seem to lag behind the excellence of the drawings. This is especially true in the introductory section where there would seem to be too much straining after effects. But once Father begins to apply the lessons of the *Via Matris* to our everyday lives, then he succeeds in winning all our attention. He shows us, for example, how Mary can give us assurance when we need it most, how she can teach us to shelter the life of Christ we carry within us, how she can make us truly active members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

The very best part of the book deals with the Fourth Sorrow. Here the author is very much in tune with the needs of our times, and gives some good, practical advice on how we can go out and meet Christ in this troubled world of ours. The best way to meet Christ and to help Him bear His cross, he tells us, is to be led and assisted by the white arms of Mary, which John Andrews pictures so strikingly in his illustration.

For anyone who wants to meet Christ and live close to Him, this book is a treasure house, for it introduces us to the valiant Mother of Sorrows, and shows us how she can lead us unerringly to Him, our All and Everything.

Father Patrick McNamara, O.S.M., Portland, Ore.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. THERESE (An Introduction),
by L'Abbé Andre Combes,

P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York, 164 (+ xii) pp., \$3.00

Monsignor Philip E. Hallett has made an excellent translation from the French of this spiritual definition of the doctrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face. L'Abbé Andre Combes is professor of mystical and ascetical theology at the Institute Catholique de Paris. Father Vernon Johnson's introduction to this work states it is one of the first fruits of a congress held in Paris by theologians in 1947 to develop the theology implicit in St. Therese's spiritual doctrine and to trace her relationship to other ascetical writers of the Church. A definitive review must therefore ask the question: "Does this work accomplish its twofold purpose?" After careful study one must come to the conclusion that, although it provides a treatise of rare, spiritual beauty united to the most profound development of the theology implicit in Therese's doctrine yet given to the world, there is question of its accomplishment of its second objective as a thesis. For the spiritual doctrine of St. Therese is here developed without tracing references to the ascetic writing of her holy father, St. John of the Cross. Was not this Doctor of the Church her teacher, her doctrinal structure, on which she developed her spirituality? Is not therefore a study of her doctrine apart from its relationship to his, a partial negation of the thesis' objective? Over and beyond this, however, little Therese's desire was to make known her "little way." It is not an abstract. It is a way of life. Those who would progress in it should be led to her teacher, that he may teach them as he taught her. One expects this of a serious study. One is disappointed not to find it.

This is not to deprecate the marvelous light shed here on her spiritual growth from her third year to her decision, in her fourteenth year, to enter Carmel. The method of deduction used is psychological and chronological. This is referred to as a microanalytic examination of the writings of the saint. In the pre-Carmelite years it works with brilliant success. As applied it discloses the extent of her spiritual debt, hitherto realized by many, to Abbé Arminjon's writings, and reveals for the first time the absolute in her soul's first movements toward God. There are seven chapters. Each is an independent, chronological, and theological study of her prayer; her spiritual doctrine; her "little way"; and her universal message.

The reader is so stirred by the work of God in her soul in childhood disclosed by this method, that the frustration is all the keener when entering the period of her spiritual maturing, the method is changed. It still is chronological and mainly theological. But relationship to other ascetical writing is no longer traced and analyzed. From now on it is the Abbé Combes alone whose analysis we read. And this of the time when, as she herself writes, all her spiritual food was her father St. John. In him, except for the Gospels, she found her sole spiritual nourishment.

Surely this silence is mysterious, especially in view of the statement "If we can discover the secret of her strength, we shall have found the principle of universal appeal, one eminently suited to the spiritual needs of all mankind." And then: "The principle is already discovered. It is 'the little way of spiritual childhood'" (p. 119). For is it not a fact that Therese's glory lies in this: that in demonstrating her "little way" she has thus given to all a perfect and universal application of the "way" of "nothingness" of her great, spiritual father! And we are reminded that "It is well to have a safe guide when thoroughly examining a science which is naturally secret, and the Church points out to us John of the Cross" (cf. *St. John of the Cross*, by Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., p. xiii).

One cannot conclude without pointing out that it is regrettable for a publisher to issue a work of such value to research without an index. Also one cannot, in a critique of a scholarly text, pass over the statement (p. 162) that St. Therese "gave to the whole Christian world the most authentic echo of the Gospel Carmel ever emitted." This, of course, must be an unintentional statement, made out of loving and understandable enthusiasm. For there before us all, to the contrary, is the solemn declaration of the Church in elevating Carmel's St. John of the Cross to the Doctorate because of his mystical teaching.

Mary F. Kiely, Providence, R. I.

LOUIS MARTIN, *An Ideal Father*, by Louis and Marjorie Wust,

Apostolate of the Press, Derby, N. Y., 374 pp., with bibliography, cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

His Excellency, Archbishop Byrne of Santa Fe, contributes a delightful *Introduction* to this intimate pen portrait of Louis Martin, father of the Little Flower. Lisieux Carmel sends the cover picture painted by Sister Genevieve (Celine) together with a tiny, charming letter of approbation. The authors state in their preface that this biography has been sent forth as a labor of love, in the interests of deeper appreciation for the important role Catholic fatherhood can take to develop sanctity in the home. Louis Wust is a research analyst in the War Department. His wife was a teacher before their marriage.

This unpretentious biography of St. Therese's father is also a sketch of the Martin family life, drawn from family letters, as well as from St. Therese's *Autobiography*. We are given an accurate, matter-of-fact picture, therefore, of Zelig (Guerin) Martin, mother of St. Therese, and of Louis Martin, the father; as well as the aunts, uncles, cousins of the family circle. It was a Catholic home, but it was a modern home. Parents and relatives emerge much as any others, not at all plaster figures. It continually amazes us to read of their naturalness; their common-sense conversations; the practical point of view they bring to their children's affairs and their uncertainty as to what is best; their laughing and fooling; their family visiting. Its reality is the more striking because most of it comes to us in these pages, not supernaturalized by the pen of the Little Flower, but as written by themselves in their letters to one another.

As life goes on, and the usual problems arising from a wife and mother's death develop, Louis Martin is obliged to more forceful direction. He has a family of five girls to rear and educate; he has his aged mother to care for; he has a business to see to; he has bills to pay and a house to sell. But he has now to decide what is best, alone, as must all other men in such circumstances. It is hard. The thing is: with all this he has the greatest saint of modern times growing up under his care. He, of course, does not know this. He places her in school, he takes her shopping, he arranges for her little beach vacations with her cousins, as any father. Great sanctity is living in this everyday

environment. And the Wusts' account of it, simply told though it is, fascinates.

Here is what the authors intended, a devotional picture of a spiritually minded man, maintaining an external routine of Catholic home life, where five religious vocations took root, and at least one great saint was formed. There is much to ponder between the lines. It is ideal for gift giving to good friends.

Mary F. Kiely

MARCELINO, by Jose María Sanchez-Silva; translated by Angela Britton; illustrated by Goni,

The Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 109 pp., \$2.50

This story of a foundling boy reared by Franciscan friars in their monastery is translated from the Spanish. It was first published in Spain in 1953, where it was a best seller. The American edition was printed in Ireland and is an excellent piece of large, clear typography, with appealing drawings, done in ink and two-color wash.

Marcelino, the character who gives the book its name, is a lively scamp, five years old, as our story gets into action. One day, in an unused garret he comes upon a life-size figure of Christ on the cross. Surreptitious visits with our Lord commence gradually and subtly to change the young scamp from thoughtless ways to reverence, then from pity to love, in so subtle a way he does not realize the change in himself; he has thought only for our Lord.

Sanchez-Silva's book marks a departure in spiritual books for the American child. In Marcelino the transformation of scamp to saint is so very deep its effect eludes analysis, for the telling is one of classic simplicity. The secret of the little tale lies in the supernatural motivation underlying the whole. Here is an ideal storybook for First Communion or even Confirmation giving. It can be read to a child as young as five. It can be read by a child of eleven with ease. Catholic children who have it in their homes will be well started on the way to loving and thinking of Christ our Lord with very sensible affection.

The book is poorly bound, and the price is high because format and paper do not warrant it.

Mary F. Kiely

SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD, by Vernon Johnson,
Sheed and Ward, New York, 216 pp., \$3.25

This is to date the most common sense and yet most theological work on the doctrine of St. Therese. The author with great insight pierces the charming poetic style of the Little Flower's writing and from it extracts the theological core of her teaching. He then presents this clearly to us amid the supporting testimony of Holy Scripture and the dogmatic teachings of the Church.

"With that direct simplicity which is the dominant characteristic of her spirituality, St. Therese sweeps aside all accidentals and goes at once to the very heart of religion" — *God is Our Father*. From expounding this starting point of the Little Way — the Fatherhood of God — Vernon Johnson goes on to explain very lucidly the meaning of "little children" as conceived by St. Therese. If the book had no other merit than this one point alone (the cogent explanation of "little" in her doctrine), it would still be of great worth. However, our author in a most logical order proceeds to develop the natural consequences of the relationship between a "little" child and its heavenly Father as follows:

Love! Love that is simple and direct and intimate.

Love that comprehends the merciful love of God; which perceives that love is the primary motive in our Redemption (God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son), that sees how intensely God loves His children, that causes an acute consciousness of what the rejection of that love means to Him.

Love that opens the mind to the astounding knowledge of Truth and thereby fills the soul with profound humility and yet paradoxically leads to supreme confidence and complete self-surrender.

Love that, illumined by faith, grasps the great truth of the all-pervading disposition of Divine Providence even unto the smallest detail of daily life; then encompasses these little details with a simple yet energetic love and makes of them precious gems for the ransom of souls.

Among the details of daily life are the countless sufferings of all kinds experienced by *every* person. Here again Vernon Johnson brings out how through love the Little Flower harmonized even all this, without seeking extraordinary suffering through great penances, into a paean of praise and love for God.

He ends his explanation of her doctrine with chapters on her devotion to our Blessed Mother. Again the author manifests a real grasp of the dogmatic solidity of her teaching and explains it with great clearness.

This book, however, does lack an essential chapter. As with practically all authors who have written either of the lives or the doctrine of particular saints, Vernon Johnson views her life and doctrine at its peak. This approach has the weakness of leading those who are not familiar with spiritual theology, and the greatest number are of these, to believe that the Little Flower always thought and acted as she did at the peak of her sanctity. True, the doctrine must be explained from its point of highest development. But there is needed in our writings at least a brief indication of the way in which God progressively develops particular dogmatic concepts and brings them to fructification within souls. Souls must be taught not only a saint's doctrine, but also the way in which God gradually intensifies this sanctifying knowledge, thus causing such all-consuming love, in order that they may dispose themselves for this action of divine grace which will enable them to walk intelligently and perseveringly in the footsteps of a saintly leader. When this is more commonly done, such excellent works as this will bear far greater fruit.

Father Gabriel, O.C.D.